ISSN 0033-8672

THE RAGTIMER

MARCH/APRIL 1976

PUBLISHED BY
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSICAL RAGTIME

SPECIAL SALE OF SOCIETY REPRINT MUSIC

The sale of reprint music as a reduced price package of many different compositions has brought favourable response. THE OFFER IS MADE ON A LIMITED BASIS. (No substitutions are permitted.) Individual title may be purchased at the regular catalogue price. The economic advantage of "package" buying will be apparent.

REPRINT MUSIC PACKAGE

OFFER NO. 5

SR-027	Dusty Rag	Aufderheide
SR-045	Sleepy Hollow Rag	Woods
SR-052	Whittling Remus	Broady
SR-054	On Easy Street - in Rags	MacEachron
SR-056	Meadowlark Rag	Pitts
SR-060	The 'Possum Barbecue	Martin
SR-061	The Minstrel Man	Robinson
SR-062	The Stop Rag	Reccius
SR-130	Rube Bennett's Raggedy Rag	Bennett
SR-132	Vanity	Pratt
SR-133	Belle of the Phillipines	Stone
SR-134	Uncle Tom's Cabin	Tierney
SR-135	Smiles and Chuckles	Klickmann
SR-139	Black and Blue Rag	Nichols
SR-141	Rag Revery	Hamilton

The above 15 titles by different composers
$5.00 postpaid

****

RECORDS FOR SALE

As a service to members, THE RAGTIME SOCIETY INC. is currently in a position to have orders filled for the following records. Price quoted includes handling charges and postage.

Jazzology-JCE-71	Donald Ashwander (New View)	$5.75
Jazzology-JCE-72	William Bolcomb (own rag comps.)	$5.75
RCA-FXMI-7157	Eubie Blake (Nice Festival France)	$7.00
GNP-9032	Ann Charters (Scott Joplin comps.)	$6.25
Columbia-M33706	Dick Hyman (J. P. Johnson comps.)	$7.00
London-3010	Milton Kaye (J. F. Lamb comps.)	$6.35
London-30112	Milton Kaye (Ragtime at Rosebud	$7.50
Jazzology-15	Tony Parenti (Ragtime - Ex Circle)	$5.75
Jazzology-JCE77	Mike Polad (The Cascades)	$5.75
Patrician-510	William Roberts (Ragtime on Harpsichord)	$6.25
Patrician-516	William Roberts (R. T. on Harpsichord V. 2)	$6.25
Dirty Shame-2001	Trebor Tichenor (Ragtime Piano)	$5.75
Dirty Shame-1237	Terry Waldo (Snookums Rag)	$5.75
Fat Cat's Jazz-168	Tex Wyndham (He's a Rag Picker)	$5.75
Jazzology-JCE52	They All Played Ragtime (variety)	$5.75
Herwin-402	Red Onion Rag (variety)	$6.25

FOUNDED 1962
INCORPORATED 1970

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

KEEP IN MIND

A RAGTIME EVENT
NEXT AUTUMN

At Toronto it's
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
12th Annual BASH
on the weekend of
Sat., Oct. 23, 1976

(details come later in the year)

RAGTIME...
UNDER YOUR HAT

It's springtime again. The birds are on the move. The smell of fresh new growth is in the air. The birth of spring at the end of winter calls out for a new start. And so as you move from rag to rag in carrying on your interests in ragtime, it's time to renew your acquaintance with rags having spring-like titles like Hyacinth (Botsford), Gladiolus (Joplin), The Lily (Thompson), Springtime (Pratt) and Sunflower (Wenrich). That seems to be enough of the cheerful nonsense. The point of it all is to suggest that your enjoyment of ragtime can be increased when you avoid narrow repetition. For example, it's time to move THE ENTERTAINER to the bottom of the JOPLIN pile for a spell, and to explore less familiar works of that same composer and to move on to other composers of classical ragtime.

JOHN ARPIN gained more distinction for himself earlier this year. He was chosen by RCA along with his trio to make the first Canadian direct-to-disc recording. Why was John chosen for the Canadian debut of this modernized method? The reason is obvious. In recording direct-to-disc, there is the need for musicians to play perfectly. It is terribly demanding because an entire record side must be cut directly without interruption and without mistakes. The method reduces the number of pressings which can be made, but eliminates taping and mixing procedures. The reward, however, has been an astonishing improvement in sound and feeling of presence for the listener.

Occasionally, when TEX WYNDHAM sends in his RECORD REVIEW he will set down comments about his

(continued on page 4)

THE RAGTIMER is the official publication of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc., P.O. Box 520, Weston, Ontario, Canada, M9N 3N3. All rights of THE RAGTIMER are reserved to the Corporation. Membership is $8.00 per year and includes all issues of THE RAGTIMER published during the current year.

general activities. In the last mailing we received his shortest communication ever - "Playing a lot of casual jobs - Busy nearly every weekend - Best to you all." We recognize that his growing reputation as a musician and entertainer is making greater and greater demands on his time. Nevertheless he has continued to find time for his contribution to THE RAGTIMER. His efforts over the years are sincerely appreciated.

BEN CONROY is a popular member of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY who comes up to Toronto each year from Austin, Texas to attend the annual "Bash". He is a fine pianist, fun-loving and enthusiastic supporter of our Society. It does not escape attention nor is it surprising to find that Ben is equally ready to share his talents in the role of a serious citizen of his home community. In a truly ecumenical gesture, Ben played ragtime and the blues in the course of a recent Sunday church service at St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Austin. After the service he played and discussed more of this music. It was St. Michael's first service of the year dealing with a planned series of Bicentennial Observances. Ben found his contribution enjoyed by a grateful rector and congregation. This, then, is our friendly ragtimer Benjamin J. Conroy Jr. in a different light. Ben was born in Vermont and educated at the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md. He went to Texas in the mid-fifties while in the process of establishing cable television companies. He is vice-president and director of Communications Properties. Ben and his wife Toni have seven children.

EUBIE BLAKE continues to be an inveterate entertainer and now traveller. Early March saw him on the Johnny Carson Show with Bill Cosby as host. Late March it was back to New York for the Bill Bolcom and wife Joan concert at Lincoln Center where Eubie is to appear as their special guest. Then for April 18 and 19 he will be in New Orleans where he is to be a guest artist at the Jazz Heritage Festival which opens on April 9 and promises a schedule of seven important concerts.

Our back cover carries a photo of Eubie's latest collection of piano solos in folio form. (See also the BOOK REVIEW by TEX WYNDHAM in this issue.)

****

ST. LOUIS RAGTIMERS - EUROPE BOUND

We have received word that the St. Louis Ragtimers will be visiting Germany during the 3 weeks of May 23rd to June 12th, 1976. The trip will be made under the auspices of the Bicentennial Horizons of American Music (BHAM!). The group is scheduled to appear at the Dusseldorf Music Festival.

****

NOTICE

WHEN ORDERING RECORDS, MUSIC OR OTHER ITEMS FROM THE RAGTIME SOCIETY please send payment (payable in Canada) with the original order. We do not have the facilities or help to look after a billing or invoicing system. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

****

RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Golden Crest CRS-31031 "More Scott Joplin Rags", by The New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble.

Selections: Original Rags, Elite Syncopations, Bethena, Wall Street Rag, Magnetic Rag, Palm Leaf Rag, Solace, Euphonic Sounds, Peacherine Rag, Scott Joplin's New Rag, Pine Apple Rag, Gladiolus Rag.

Personnel: Gunther Schuller, conductor; Robert Winiker, trumpet; Bruce Creditor, clarinet; Thomas Foulds, trombone; Cyrus Stevens, Amy Teare, violins; James Froelich, viola; Bruce Coppock, cello; David Reskin, flute and piccolo; Myron Romanul, piano; Edwin Barker, bass; Gary Ofenluch, tuba; Mark Belair, drums -- plus, on certain selections, Lynda Jacquin, oboe; Diane Heffner, clarinet; Marlene Mazzuca, bassoon; and/or George Sullivan, french horn.

Angel S-36074 "Scott Joplin: Palm Leaf Rag", by The Southland Stingers.

Selections: Palm Leaf Rag, A Breeze From Alabama, Bethena, The Favorite, Stoptime Rag, Gladiolus Rag, Solace, Pine Apple Rag, Pleasant Moments, Wall Street Rag.

Personnel: George Sponhaltz, conductor; John Audino and Mario Guarneri or Roy Poper, trumpets; Dominick Fera, clarinet; Dick Nash, trombone; Jerry Vinci, Nathan Ross, violins; Allan Harshman, viola; Marie Fera, cello; Ronnie Lang, flute and piccolo; Ralph Grierson, piano; Tommy Johnson, tuba; Chuck Del Monico, bass; Shelly Manne, drums.

RBF 22 "Ragtime Entertainment".

Titles and artists: Black And White Rag - El Cota; Saxanola - Clyde Doerr; King Of The Bungaloos - Gene Greene; Toots - Clarence Penney; Ragtime Skedaddle - George Schweinfest; Smiles And Chuckles - Six Brown Brothers; Ragtime Drummer - James Lent; Georgia Grind - Signor Grinderino; Haunting Rag - Walter B. Rogers' Band; Whoa! You Heifer - Prince's Band; Pastime Rag - National Promenade Band; Bantam Step - Conway's Band; Frozen Bill - Pryor's Band; Zam-A-Zam Rag - Rishell Band; Belle Of The Philippines - Zon-O-Phone Concert Orchestra; Hungarian Rag - Conway's Band.

Puritan 5002 "Scott Joplin, composer; Bob Tryforous, guitarist".

Selections: Weeping Willow, Euphonic Sounds, Paragon Rag, Sunflower Slow Drag, Maple Leaf Rag, The Cascades, Magnetic Rag, Gladiolus Rag, The Entertainer, The Nonpareil, Pleasant Moments, The Ragtime Dance.

The first two Lps listed above are very much alike, even to the point of substantial overlap of titles. Both follow up the success of the first Lp by the New England Conser-

vatory group, as compounded by the extraordinary popularity of Schuller's arrangements of Joplin rags for the soundtrack of the film "The Sting". Indeed, the attempt to trade on this publicity is especially blatant on the jacket of the Angel Lp, which looks almost exactly like the sleeve of the first New England Conservatory record, proclaims this studio-assembled group to be The Southland "Stingers", and contains liner notes which make endless references to the movie and the previous disc.

Nevertheless, hearing these two very fine efforts, I give the Angel a narrow edge. Both Lps are well-recorded, cleanly and confidently played, and offer Joplin's tunes at brisk, no-nonsense tempos. The Angel, however, features arrangements that generally have a bit more color -- spicing repeats with additional effects, for example, to build the performances -- and use the brass somewhat more prominently to give things increased zest and bite. You won't go wrong with either one, actually, but the similarity is so great that you won't want both unless you're really hooked on the style.

As a footnote to those few who haven't already been exposed to the "Sting"-Schuller brand of band ragtime, this music is based on rags as arranged for small dance orchestras of the ragtime years. Not "hot" or "swinging", these Lps reflect a relentless good cheer, as well as a gentleness and charm in their sound that justifies the "classic" in "classic ragtime". The orchestrations display a thorough understanding of Joplin's approach, employing various instrumental combinations to flesh out contrasting themes or dynamic effects inherent in skeletal form in Joplin's solo piano scores; Schuller's arrangement of the unusual "Euphonic Sounds" is particularly outstanding in this respect.

The original sound of the ragtime years can be heard on Folkways-RBF 22 compiled by ragtime pianist and scholar David A. Jasen. Eight military band recordings, which make up Side Two, are probably a little too much of a good thing for most listeners, but Side One has a surprising and pleasing variety of material: Greene's 1917 vocal, with its highlights of nonsense lyrics and raspy bass interludes, is a model of professionalism and hilarity; the saxophone sextette that bounces through "Smiles And Chuckles" has as happy, full-bodied and well-coordinated a sound as you could want; Schweinfest's 1902 piccolo solo with piano accompaniment offers considerable charm and substantial interest to historians due to its very early (1902) recording date; and you'll smile and tap your feet throughout each bar of Dabney's "Georgia Grind" as played on a hurdy-gurdy!

Sound quality is remarkably good, especially in view of the age of these performances. An off-beat, but enjoyable album which also touches an area that has received relatively little attention in the ragtime revival.

While on the subject of non-piano ragtime, I ought to warn you away from Tryforous' monotonous Lp of Joplin rags transcribed for solo guitar. Even allowing for the inherent limitations of the guitar vs. the piano, I think that an unnecessarily large amount of Joplin has been lost in the transition; the result is that the performances sound more like each other than like the compositions on which they are based. With Tryforous turning in usually heavy-handed and often fuzzily-executed readings, listening through the record becomes something of an ordeal. Skip this one.

****

PUBLIC TELEVISION PRESENTS MAX MORATH IN ONE HOUR SPECIAL - "THE RAGTIME YEARS"

MAX MORATH

Toronto viewers were able to catch this show on March 6, 1976 when it was aired during prime Saturday night time by the public television station at Buffalo, N. Y. (Channel 17). Harvey and Marion Roehl of Vestal Press, Vestal, N. Y. thoughtfully sent along a clipping pertaining to the special by Gene Grey which appeared in the PRESS, Binghamton, N. Y. on Wednesday March 10, 1976. Gene Grey's interview article was headed - A LOOK BACK TO THE RAGTIME YEARS. "New York - It may send a shudder down the spine of Scott Joplin admirers, but "The Entertainer" may become to beginning pianists what "Lady of Spain" has become to accordionists - an incessant song, played badly, that never goes away.

"It could happen," mused Max Morath, the excellent ragtime pianist who has a special show, "The Ragtime Years," Tuesday at 8 p. m. on WSKG Public Television, Channel 46.

"The song is really very simple to play and you hear a lot of piano students playing it now," he said.

On Morath's wall in his office at 850 7th Avenue, is a picture of Joplin, the black composer who died in poverty at the turn of the Century.

As Morath said, ragtime music has never really gone away, but the motion picture "The Sting" resurrected Joplin's fame by using his music on the soundtrack. The theme of that picture, "The Entertainer," was written by Joplin but until now it wasn't his most famous rag. That honor went to "The Maple Leaf Rag" which is also heard in the movie's score.

A lot of people, said Morath, seem to think Joplin invented the rag style. "To say that is like saying The Beatles invented rock, it just isn't so," said Morath. "Joplin

contributed a lot to the style and he was one of the major composers, but he didn't invent it."

"Ragtime wasn't just Joplin. It was the music of a whole period, that lasted about 20 years in the late 1800s and early 1900s and it was very controversial."

Just as some people have condemned rock as the work of the devil, so too did rag come into criticism from the pulpit. As Morath explains in his television program, in 1901 the American Federation of Musicians passed a unanimous resolution condemning ragtime and urged its members not to play it. "And that would be like the Teamsters' Union coming out against trucks," said Morath.

It is that period of the history, the turn of the Century which interests Morath even more than the music and, by using the music, he illustrates the great changes taking place, changes that literally changed how we lived.

"Do you realize all that was happening in that period ? The phonograph was invented and that changed lives. Movies were starting, people were starting to think seriously about flight, electric lights were coming in. Elevators were invented and without them, you wouldn't have sky-scrapers which changed the face of cities."

"I'm fascinated by the history of those things and the impact they've had," Morath said.

Morath doesn't use an academic approach in telling about that fascinating period of history. "I don't pretend to be academic, I'm an entertainer and I use that era history as the basis for my performance."

Still, there are probably few people as capable of bringing the music and history alive as the ragtime pianist, who has been working with the material for more than 20 years.

"I fell into that style of playing when I was a kid and I've found that the songs fit my talents as a performer," he said.

Through the years though the entertainer has become a recognized authority on ragtime. A decade ago, his PBS series on ragtime was acclaimed and his special next week may lead to another series next year entitled, "The Illustrated Past".

Morath prefers dealing with Public Television, rather than the commercial television for two reasons. "Long ago I gave up the idea of going to the networks with anything. I'd rather do what I do uncluttered by compromise. Besides, to be candid, I don't think the commercial networks are going to give an hour to a Max Morath."

"I probably make less money with PBS than I would with the nets, but I'm doing ok. I've no complaints."

Scott Joplin, it is said, went to the grave wanting his music to be taken seriously, which is why he spent his last years writing an opera. Does Morath take his music

seriously?

"What's serious? Was Chopin serious? Was Joplin a serious composer and Irving Berlin not?"

"Most musicians I know don't use labels. Labels are useless. It's all music. I don't know that there is anything that can be labeled serious music, I only know that there are serious musicians," said Morath.

****

A REWRITE OF HISTORY
(or How To Clean Up A Shady Past)

(Ed. Comment: It seems indeed that Sedalia is exhibiting a growing interest in its ragtime heritage. The Toronto Star of Friday, March 12, 1976 carried the following item:

"JOPLIN HIT HONOURED MEN'S CLUB Sedalia, Mo. (UPI) - Scott Joplin's phenomenal 1899 hit Maple Leaf Rag was not composed in honor of a bawdy brothel as popularly believed, but to recognize a gentlemen's social club, according to a document found this week.

The song ushered in the era of ragtime at the turn of the century and was composed one year following the incorporation of the Maple Leaf Club, of which Joplin was a member.

The document discovered by Naomi Brown, Pettis county recorder of deeds, was the original incorporation papers for the club. The handwritten charter shows the club was not to have been a boisterous barroom where women were available, as was believed by historians.

Dated Dec. 23, 1898, it states the club was formed "for the purposes of advancing . . . the bodily and mental health of such persons as might be or hereafter become its members."

Membership was limited to 100, according to the document."

****

SOME THOUGHTS ON RAGTIME FROM ENGLAND

(Taken from Times Literary Supplement Aug. 4, 1972 - the published letter of a reader. This was brought to our attention by member Stephen York. Here again is that frequently attempted definition of ragtime.)

Sir, - Unfortunately the history of ragtime is often confused with the history of jazz, and the history of jazz is again usually treated as a history of recorded jazz music,

which is not quite the same thing.

Ragtime substantially pre-dates jazz. Honky-tonk piano-playing, to which your reviewer refers, is really an attempt by unlettered musicians to play a mixture of ragtime and blues under very different conditions from those in which ragtime was originally composed. Primitive though this music may sound, it does not predate ragtime. Ragtime is essentially a pre-recording music, written for home and public performance in sheet music form, or transcribed on to auto-piano rolls. These latter are often synthetically overelaborated by additional punching after "recording". Ragtime is essentially bound up with the mass-production of the piano in America, with the mass printing of music, and with the development of the mechanical piano. One of the most extraordinary elements in Joplin's story is the relationship between Joplin, a negro who played the piano in Sedalia, Missouri, brothels for a living, and John Stark, his publisher and patron. Stark was a puritanical white New Englander who moved to Sedalia and opened a piano and music shop there, and went into publishing. "Maple Leaf Rag", written by Joplin and first published by Stark, was the first sheet music number ever to sell one million copies.

Jazz music itself may be unkindly described as an attempt to play ragtime by ear on unsuitable instruments. This, however, neglects the blues element in jazz. When Ferdinand (Jelly Roll) Morton, undoubtedly one of the finest piano virtuosos of the genre, made the outrageous claim in 1938 to have invented jazz just before the First World War he was perhaps nearer to the truth than his critics would admit. Morton does seem to have been the first musician to skilfully fuse ragtime with blues harmonies, producing a musical result quite different from either of these two dissimilar forms. -- Bernard Myers, Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London SW7 2EU.

****

A RAGTIME FESTIVAL AT ST. LOUIS

The 12th Annual Ragtime Festival on the GOLDENROD SHOWBOAT at St. Louis, Missouri, is set for the week of June 14 to June 19, 1976 (Mon. thru Sat.). The event promises the appearance of great ragtime pianists and will feature the St. Louis Ragtimers as well as The Salty Dogs from Chicago, Queen City Jazz Band from Denver and others.

You can make advance payment and reservations up to June 7, 1976. We understand the week long package pass is $30.00. Reservation order blanks and program information may be obtained by writing to: Goldenrod Showboat, Showboat Landing, St. Louis, Missouri 63102, U.S.A. Telephone (314) 621-3311.

This colourful, Mississippi River locale will keep calling you back to the scene ---- once you've made your first visit!

****

BOOK REVIEW

BY TEX WYNDHAM

"Sincerely Eubie Blake", produced by Eubie Blake Music, distributed by Edward B. Marks Music Corporation and Belwin Mills Publishing Corp., $4.50.

Contents: The Charleston Rag, Eubie Dubie, Eubie's Classical Rag, Brittwood Rag, Kitchen Tom, Poor Katie Redd, The Baltimore Todolo, Poor Jimmy Green, Rhapsody in Ragtime.

Do Ragtime Society member-pianists really need a "review" of a folio containing, for a mere $4.50, (1) the scores to nine previously unpublished Blake rags, transcribed by Terry Waldo (with Eubie's help) from Eubie's recordings, (2) photos of Blake with biographical data, and (3) Terry's analysis of the works, with tips on performance? Clearly not -- I suspect that they all left for the music store as soon as they read the contents.

Does anyone who reads The Ragtimer need to be reminded that a Blake rag is second to none in quality -- rich in melody, consistently inventive, logically and dramatically constructed, pulsing with rhythm? Don't we all know that Eubie is a master of the full range of ragtime expression, from the funky "Redd" through the flashy "Charleston" to the lyrical "Rhapsody"? You're right -- that just states the obvious.

Who will be surprised to discover that these titles are tough to play as written, with their frequent call for up-tempo left-hand tenths, eccentric rhythmic figures, full use of the keyboard, intricate cross-handed passages, and deployment of an arsenal of effects gathered over ninety years at the keyboard? Nobody (as Bert Williams used to say).

So there's nothing left for me to do here, really. I might mention that the volume not only greatly expands the catalogue of available Blake material, but also of East Coast ragtime in general, which hasn't seen much print recently. And even if you can't cut the manuscripts as written, a little imagination should enable you to tailor them to your ability without losing the potential for worthwhile performance while, in the process, you'll pick up a cornucopia of piano "tricks" that you can transfer to your own crowd-pleasers. But what really needs saying is "congratulations" -- on a real fine job, to Terry, Eubie and everyone else involved.

Get a copy. Get two.

While we're on sheet music, Austin E. Kitchen has published his own "Once Upon A Time . . .", which he performed at our 1975 Bash. It's not too hard, and features a distinctive and well-knit opening strain. Available at $1.50 per copy from Austin E. Kitchen, R.R. 3, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada L5M 2B3.

****

A SPECIAL BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR EUBIE BLAKE

(Ed. Comment: The Amas Repertory Theatre, the Waldorf-Astoria, and hundreds of his admirers helped EUBIE celebrate his ninety-third birthday in February. The following is taken from "THE TALK OF THE TOWN" section of THE NEW YORKER Magazine of March 8, 1976 which pays tribute to this unique entertainer.)

"BIRTHDAY PARTY

Eubie Blake, the black pianist and composer, who began playing and writing ragtime music in the late nineteenth century, is about the only artist we know of whose work has enjoyed several revivals in his own lifetime. The latest renewal of interest in his music started around 1950, and has picked up a special momentum in the last seven or eight years, and Mr. Blake is clearly enjoying every bit of it. In one of Casey Stengel's declining years, he remarked that most people his age had been dead for a long time. It is the sort of remark we can imagine Eubie Blake making about himself, for his tongue just misses being as irrepressible and adventuresome as Casey's was. At all events, Mr. Blake remains decidedly alive - a fact that was underscored a couple of Saturday evenings ago, when hundreds of his admirers, including us, filled the Starlight Roof of the Waldorf-Astoria to help him observe his ninety-third birthday.

Mr. Blake was born in Baltimore in 1883, and had learned the piano and organ by 1889, at around which time his playing began to reflect the influences of what certain people of that period called "lowlife" music. One day, his mother, a deeply religious woman, came into the house to hear Eubie swinging his music lessons in ragtime, and invited him to take that sort of playing elsewhere. He did just that a few years later, in 1898, making his first public appearance in one of the notorious sporting houses of Baltimore, where he had been asked to supply the musical side of the entertainment. He wrote his first composition, "Charleston Rag," in 1899, the same year that Scott Joplin - ragtime's genius - published his much more famous "Maple Leaf Rag." It was not until 1921 - after Mr. Blake had spent a number of years developing his skills on the vaudeville circuit and in various East Coast night clubs - that he hit the big time, in New York. That year - along with his collaborator the lyricist Noble Sissle, who died last year, at the age of eighty-six - he brought the highly successful musical "Shuffle Along" to Broadway. Songs from that show - as well as other songs that Mr. Blake wrote, with Noble Sissle or with Andy Razaf - have since become securely lodged in the popular repertory. Mr. Blake himself went on to become one of the legendary names of America's popular music.

His birthday party at the Waldorf came as close to being a democratic affair as the circumstances allowed. The crowd was made up of blacks and whites and foreigners, one couple having travelled all the way from Denmark to be there. Dress, optional, ranged from formal evening wear to casual denim. Ages ran from the late teens right on up to Mr. Blake's own venerable ninety-three. The black bourgeoisie and the white bourgeoisie, both of them well dressed and glittering, were out in force - reminding us of how in the eighteen-nineties, when ragtime was coming in, their parents and grandparents had shunned Mr. Blake's kind of music. We are unable to report that the poor - whose forebears had embraced ragtime openly - were out in any force, or, for that matter, that they were there at all. Their presence was part of what the circumstances did not allow, since it cost twenty-five dollars to get in. Not that this was any fault of

Mr. Blake's. He strikes one as being such a soft touch that he probably couldn't find the heart to charge twenty-five dollars for anything. The party had been thrown for him by a group called the Amas Repertory Theatre, and it was they who set the price of admission. Not that they could be blamed, either, for they needed enough proceeds from the affair to establish a children's-theatre scholarship fund to be named after Mr. Blake.

Eubie Blake was an exemplary guest of honour. He seemed to have time for everybody who came up to him, he signed every bit of paper that was shoved at him, and he was willing to go on talking as long as anyone wanted, or as long as anyone was able to keep him talking - for, as he said at one point during the evening, "I don't like dead air." Before the formal tributes began, we walked over and joined a group that had gathered around Mr. Blake's table - which he shared with his wife, the former dancer Marion Tyler, to whom he has been married for the past thirty years, and with some close friends - to hear what was being said. We got there as Mr. Blake was answering a question about Scott Joplin, and caught this part of his reply: "Poor Scott, he never got the credit he deserved in his lifetime. I got more credit than he did. But most of what I got belongs to Scott, for I'm not the musical man he was. It's just that I've been around a little longer."

A man in black tie asked where the word "ragtime" came from. "To tell you the truth," Mr. Blake said, his face crinkling up in a roguish smile, "I'm ninety-three years old and I still don't know."

As we listened to these exchanges, we had a chance to study Mr. Blake more closely. He was trim and dapper, wearing a dark-blue double-breasted suit, with wide lapels, deep side vents, and tapered waist; a white handkerchief was sticking out of his breast pocket. He sat very straight, as if he didn't want to rumple his attire. Everything about his appearance, however, was dominated by his pate, which does not have a hair left on it. But for a salt-and-pepper mustache and eyebrows, his entire head looks as clean as a light bulb. If there is anything about him that attracts more notice than his dress and his head, it is his voice, which is always joyously loud. He simply never lowers it, no matter what the subject is, who is listening, or whether he is addressing an audience of one or of a hundred. With people standing about, he is clearly not the sort of man to take aside for an opinion on a matter of some delicacy. "I can't talk soft" is the way Mr. Blake puts it, at the top of his voice. He has been permanently amplified ever since his early days on the vaudeville circuit, when there were no microphones and a performer had to learn how to throw his voice all the way to the back of the largest room.

Someone asked Mr. Blake whether he could remember the first time he came to New York. "First time I came to New York on a visit was in 1902," he bellowed. "I was one of a bunch of kids doing a little buck-dancing for a show called 'In Old Kentucky.' They piled us into a furniture wagon and backed us up to the stage door of the theatre, which fronted on Fourteenth Street. I think it was called the Academy of Music. After the show, they piled us back into the furniture wagon and drove us down to Bleecker Street. That's where we were staying. These days, I don't bother to tell people I was in New York in 1902, because they'd never believe it if I told them that at that time

Bleecker Street was almost nothing but Negroes. You didn't have no Harlem in those days. At least, Harlem wasn't for Negroes. Most of them lived downtown. A lot of people question my memory about these things. They think I'm so old I must not know what I'm saying. But when I tell you something, you can bet your money on it, 'cause I don't talk just to be talking."

At this point, a tall, white-haired man joined the gathering around Mr. Blake, who stopped everything to greet him, and identified him as "Dr. Liberman, the man who has been keeping me alive these past twenty-five years." Dr. George Liberman talks nowhere near as loudly as Mr. Blake does, so there was no danger in taking him aside to get a quiet report on the health of his famous patient. "Everything considered, his health is very good," the Doctor said. "He is a fantastic physical specimen, with a fantastic constitution. It is most unusual to find a man his age with such supple fingers. He has trouble with them from time to time, for at this point in his life the joints tend to wear out. But he responds to treatment remarkably well. He has a great capacity to bounce back from illnesses. I don't hesitate to give him the medicine I would give a man of thirty-eight."

A moment later, Mr. Blake was asked to move to the center of the ballroom, where there was a bandstand, to pose for television and still cameras. He ambled over, with something of a limp - stiffness of joints, no doubt - and sat at the piano. While the cameramen shot Mr. Blake from all sides, he sat with his hands in his lap and smiled the sort of ceremonial smiles he must have imagined were required of him. After a while, he started fidgeting - lifting his fingers from his lap, as though he thought they should be doing something. Finally, he said to everyone, "Shouldn't I be playing the piano?" Yes, of course, everyone said. Leaving the cameras to look out for themselves, he started to play, and before long he was lost in some wildly effervescent ragtime."

****

A BROOKLYN SCHOOL BOARD RENAMES P.S 206 IN HONOUR OF JOSEPH F. LAMB

The Community School Board, District 22, of Brooklyn, N.Y. approved the renaming of P.S. 206, on March 3, 1976, so that in future it will be known as the "Joseph F. Lamb School". The public meeting was provided with reasons for this action by the following agenda particulars in support of the required resolution:

EXPLANATION

"Joseph Francis Lamb (1887-1960) was a composer of ragtime music masterpieces. He composed and published his best works during the golden period of ragtime music from 1907-1919. Mr. Lamb was a contemporary of the ragtime masters, Scott Joplin and James Scott. Some of his masterpieces include, American Beauty, Patricia Rag, Top Liner Rag and the Ragtime Nightingale.

Mr. Lamb lived on East 21st Street around the corner from P.S. 206 for over 50 years. The parents of P.S. 206 are desirous of perpetuating the

music that will serve to remember his contribution in the years to come. Indeed, it was the collaborative efforts of this team which helped shape modern musical theatre in the United States as we know it today.

****

PETER TURNER
1936-1976

British entertainer Peter Turner died on February 4, 1976, while hospitalized at Cambridge, England. He was a victim of cancer. For a long period ending in 1971, he provided entertainment at the piano in the famous Bird Cage in Cambridge. In 1972 he took over the piano chair with the Apex Jazz Band at the Sword In Hand in Bury St. Edmunds. Peter spent the final years of his life at Chesterfield in Derbyshire.

It is with a sense of loss to our Society that Peter's death is reported. He had been a loyal and active member for a dozen years. Ragtime formed an important part of his interest in music and certainly of his repertoire. He was an enthusiastic spokesman in the U. K. for ragtime and was often responsible for introducing new members into our Society. His letters to the Society were always informative about growing ragtime developments in England.

Peter left his school days behind with a firm interest in traditional jazz and blues. A whole new dimension was added when he discovered classic ragtime and became a ragtimer for life, which at 40 years of age ends all too soon.

In his final letter, which arrived at the end of last year, Peter wrote cheerfully of his need to cancel out on playing dates and the possible postponement of a series of college lectures he was to give on ragtime and the blues. Then came the sad news of his death.

Peter is survived by his wife, Elspeth, and two young sons, to whom we extend sympathy and these words of encouragement.

****

CAPSULE
INFORMATION
RELEASES ---------- FOR HAPPY HUNTING

NOTE: We often receive information from members and other sources which can be passed along in brief form as items of possible general interest. CAPSULE INFORMATION RELEASES do not refer to items or material which can be obtained from the SOCIETY. Further, we do not guarantee the accuracy of the information given. Under the conditions stated, we are able to publicize a broader coverage of promising information coming to our attention.

Book - SCOTT JOPLIN AND THE RAGTIME ERA by PETER GAMMOND - 223 pages, hard cover, copyright 1975 with Foreword by EUBIE BLAKE. For information write to St. Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. 10010, USA. Includes 4 appendices on ragtime references covering Books, Music, LP Recordings and Checklist of Music by Scott Joplin. Gammond is an English author and lives in Middlesex, England. He has written many books on the subject of popular music.

LP Record - LOU HOOPER PIANO - 12 solo-piano performances recorded in Montreal in 1973 (CBC Canadian Collection 380) - available by mailing order to Radio Canada, International Transcription Service, P. O. Box 6000, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Price $4. 00 (in Canadian funds).

LP Record - AMOUREUSE, Johnny Maddox piano - Redstone (RSS-101) produced by William A. Richey - This LP contains a variety grouping of rags, blues, jazz, ballads and sentimental Waltzes. Write to Music/n All, 3rd and Fillmore, Denver, Colorado, 80222, USA, for particulars.

LP Record - SCOTT JOPLIN TREEMONISHA - by DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON - 2 record set of Original Cast Recording. Offered as Scott Joplin's only opera. Write to King Karol Records, Box 629, Times Square Station, New York, N. Y., U. S. A., for particulars.

****

LETTERS

Letters are welcome from members. Excerpts believed to be of general interest are passed along in this section of THE RAGTIMER.

G. G. Cayugan, 11627 Highland Drive,
Warren, Michigan 48089, U. S. A.

Would like to hear from members interested in exchanging ragtime music, or having such sheet music and records for sale.

****

Member John Hasse (see Something Doing . . .) is discographer of the journal ETHNOMUSICOLOGY. He is compiling a bibliography on ragtime and has already gathered about 400 entries. He wonders if other members of The Ragtime Society could help him with additional citations or provide references, ideas and leads on published matter referring to ragtime, i. e. articles, reviews, clippings, letters, record liner notes, photos, rollography, books, etc. If you are able to help or interested in helping John, he would like to hear from you.

John Hasse
Archives of Traditional Music
057 Maxwell Hall, Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana 47401, U. S. A.

****

Listeners to Radio Station KSLM in Salem, Oregon, recently, were treated to something "just a little different".

Sherry and myself contacted Lee Hazelle, a well known and popular radio personality, whose evening radio program is enjoyed by local residents of the Willamette Valley area. We asked if he would be interested in "putting together" a program of ragtime recordings, if we would provide the recordings from our collection. He was most interested and enthusiastic. As a result of our meeting, a half hour of ragtime music was presented on Tuesday night, March 16th, featuring the talents of Eubie Blake, John Arpin, St. Louis Ragtimers, Bob Darch, Johnny Maddox, Glenn Rowell, Max Morath, Charles Thompson, Joe Jordan, Charles Lamb and others.

Lee used the recordings throughout the rest of the week, along with his other fine presentations. His is a very interesting program, consisting of music of the "Big Band Era" along with other older standards plus the music of today. Throughout his program he carries on a very informative, interesting and often educational discussion on every subject available from what makes the human heart work to bicycle paths in Oregon.

We are sure his listeners enjoyed the ragtime segment, as did we.

Oakley and Sherry Riddell
Salem, Oregon, U. S. A.

****

I am thinking about trying to write an article on Aufderheide and Niebergall, since they were both from Indianapolis apparently. I haven't begun to look through the local archives. Could any members of The Ragtime Society make suggestions on sources for beginning my research?

Jared Carter, Managing Editor,
Continuing Education & College Department
Bobbs-Merrill Co, 4300 West 62nd St.
Indianapolis, Indiana 46268, U. S. A.

****

SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - at the Chelsea Inn, 33 Gerrard St. W., Toronto - in "The Piano Bar" Mon. to Fri. 5:00 p. m. to 8:00 p. m. and with his trio in "The Chelsea Bun" Lounge Mon. to Sat. 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

EUBIE BLAKE - The DEAN of RAGTIME - This popular recording artist and composer performs frequently at Concerts and Festivals. Does guest appearances on T. V. talk shows and is often to be heard on radio programs (watch your local press music programs for dates).

STEEN CHRISTENSEN - at the Mechanical Music Museum (MMM), Vesterbrogade 150, Copenhagen (Denmark), every 2nd & 4th Wednesday each month.

BOB DURST - (RAJAH OF RAGTIME) plays ragtime piano on the Holiday Inn circuit thru the middle U. S.

PETER FAHRENHOLTZ - plays solo ragtime piano and with bands - regularly on tour and at Stenkaelderen, Aarhus, Denmark.

"GASLIGHT" GALE FOEHNER - at Rochester, N. Y. - Regularly performing ragtime and sing-a-longs with slides at concerts and private party engagements.

RALPH GRUGEL - and The Eagle Jazz Band at East Shore Club, Lakeshore Drive, Cleveland, Ohio, Fri. and Sat.

JOHN HASSE - at The Ordinary, Nashville, Indiana, Fri. and Sat. nights.

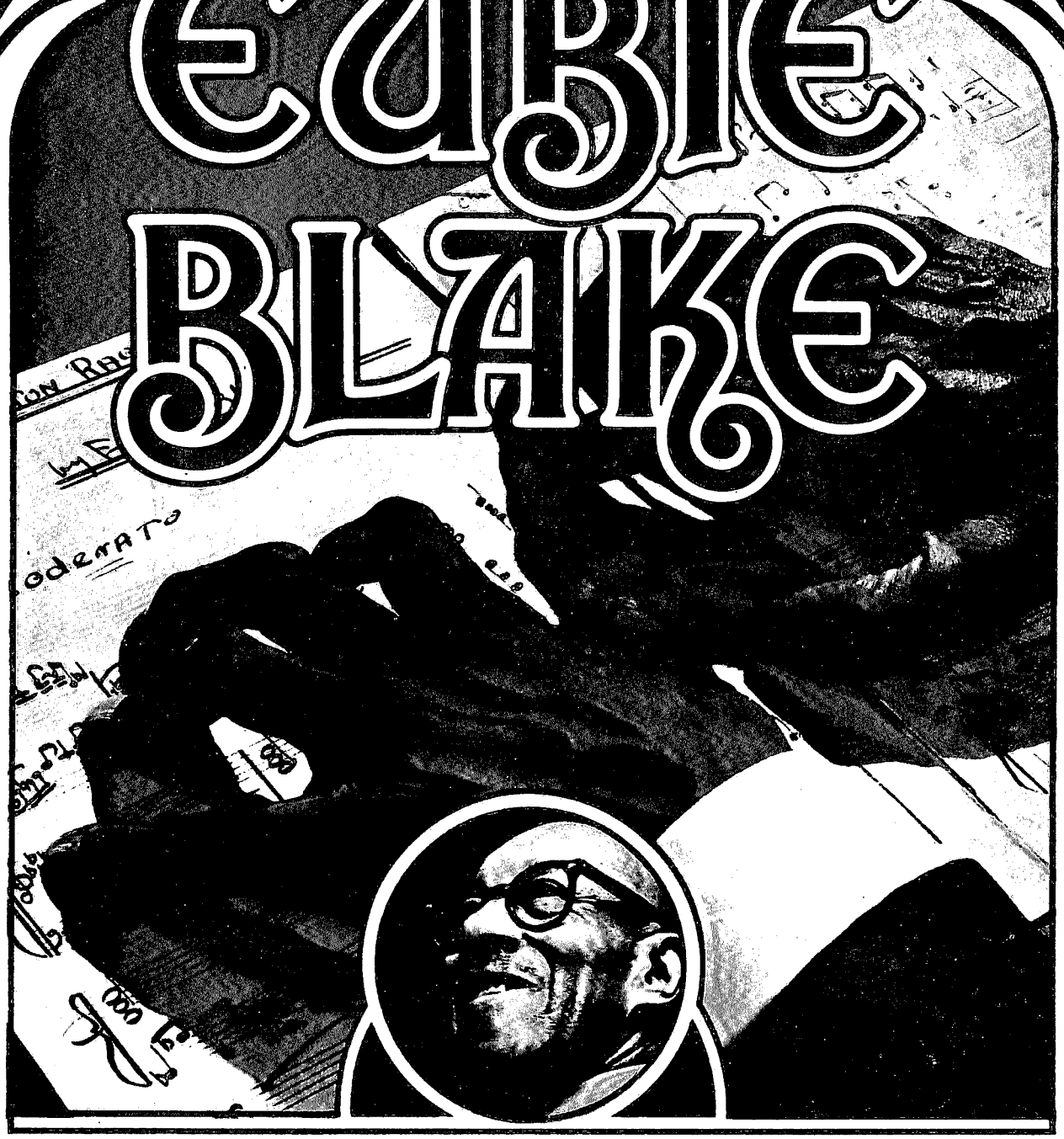
JIM HESSION - at the Polynesian Hotel (Tambu Lounge), Disney World, Orlando, Florida - six nights a week.

JIM KAPLAN - at the Pizza-Stein, 1428 W. Galena Ave., Freeport, Illinois on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

JOHN MADDOX	- at Northern Hotel, 28th & 1st Ave. N., Billings, Montana, from Mar. 1 to Mar. 27. - at Village Motor Inn, Missoula, Montana, from Mar. 29 to May 1.
KEN MAYHERCY	- (RAGTIME $ BILL) - at Signal Hill Supper Club, Craig., Col. for summer.
GLENN MEYER	- and his band at St. Louis, Mo., making regular appearances.
BOB MILNE	- at Clamdiggers Rest., 30555 Grand River, Farmington (Detroit), Mich. Mon. thru Sat. 7:30 to 12:00 p. m.
MIKE MONTGOMERY	- at The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, Detroit, Michigan, Friday nights.
MAX MORATH	- on the road with his new show "The Ragtime Years".
DR. ELI NEWBERGER	- and The New Black Eagle Jazz Band at the Stickey Wicket Pub, West Main Street, Hopkinton, Mass., Thursday 8:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. (Pianist is Bob Pilsbury).
TOM NOEL	- on the road with his living portrayal shows "Mark Twain at Home", and "Mr. Jelly Lord" based on the life of Jelly Roll Morton.
CHARLIE RASCH	- with SISTER KATE, at the Cow Palace, Bancroft Road about 8 miles west of Toledo, Ohio, Fridays and Saturdays 9:00 p. m. on.
HANK ROSS	- with Red Onion Jazz Band, at O'Connor's Beef'n Ale House, 708 Mountain Blvd., Watchung, N. J. Friday nights at 7:30 p. m. on.
TOM SCHMUTZLER	- and the Hardware City Temperance and Ragtime Society, at Shakey's Pizza Parlor, Vernon, Conn. - Fridays and Saturdays. - at The One Way Fare, Simsburg, Conn. Sunday nights.
BOB SEELEY	- at Clamdiggers Rest., 30555 Grand River, Farmington (Detroit), Mich., Mon. thru Fri. 4:00 to 7:00 p. m.
DAN SUMMERS	- and New Charleston Chasers regularly appearing in the Buffalo area.
TREBOR TICHENOR	- on The Goldenrod Showboat, at St. Louis, Missouri. Does weekly radio show on KWMU - FM 90. 7 called "RAGOPHILE with Trebor Tichenor", Fridays at 6:00 p. m.
TERRY WALDO	- has weekly half hour radio show "THIS IS RAGTIME" on National Public Radio - Check your local listing.
TEX WYNDHAM	- and The Red Lion Jazz Band, appearing regularly at Mencotti's Restaurant, 1101 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, Delaware.
BILL ZINN	- and Zinn's Ragtime String Quartet doing Concerts and College dates in the New York area.
PERFORMERS:	Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.

PRICE U.S.A.
$5.40
PRICE IN CANADA

Sincerely EUBIE BLAKE



9 Original Compositions For Piano Solo

THE CHARLESTON RAG • EUBIE'S CLASSICAL RAG • RHAPSODY IN RAGTIME • POOR JIMMY GREEN
EUBIE DUBIE • BRITTWOOD RAG • POOR KATIE REDD • KITCHEN TOM • THE BALTIMORE TODOLO

Transcribed by Terry Waldo

EUBIE BLAKE • An Essay in Photos, Stories and Music • An Analysis of his Rags

EUBIE BLAKE MUSIC
Sole Selling Agent:
EDWARD B. MARKS MUSIC CORPORATION / Belwin Mills Publishing Corp.
Exclusive distributor of all printed products:
MELVILLE, N. Y. 11746